



SURVEYING? FOR WHAT AIRPORT?

# Planes grounded, rumors fly . . .

Air Canada may be crippled by the strike of air traffic controllers but there is still one facet of the air business flying—rumors—about the site of the new Toronto International Airport.

They are flying thick and fast, and in all directions, since last week when it was reported the Orangeville area had been stroked off the list of four possible sites for the new jetport.

Now, according to officials in Queens Park and Ottawa, we can expect a decision and an announcement within the next two months.

Before you hold your breath it is wise to remember that an announcement was to have been made about this time last year. Both governments procrastinated throwing a wrench into area planning for almost two years.

Two months could stretch into two years again, although Charlie Mac-

Naughton, Ontario's Minister of transportation and communications, has been reported as saying, "We're very close to resolving a site and there should be an announcement fairly soon."

A freeze will be put on the estimated 55,000 acres picked for the jetport, once the announcement has been made, to rule out the possibility of land speculators making large profits from the sale of land.

We have heard from several people that they positively "know" the site will be in Nassagaweya township. Others are sure the new facility will be located just north of Acton in Erin township. Others are plumping for a site in Esqueving between Acton, Georgetown and Milton.

There are also strong rumors to the effect Peters Corners is the site. It's a small community of about five houses, two service stations and a motel at the

junction of Highways 5 and 8, slightly west of Hamilton.

Peters Corners has been described as being 47 miles south-west of Toronto but anyone who can read a road map knows the hamlet is about seven miles from Hamilton, which would make the new airport the Hamilton International Airport, a severe blow to Toronto promoters.

No, we have no inside information about the site as some readers seem to think. We are as much in the dark about the new airport as the federal provincial government team.

We are only guessing when we think the preferred site is in Nassagaweya because that township has all the qualifications—light population, a lot of undeveloped land with the heavy rock base of the escarpment—and above all—easy access by rail and road to the present airport and Metro Toronto whether we like it or not, the hub of Ontario.

# We were Czeched Friday . . .

Frankly, we were surprised at the lack of advance publicity for the appearance of the world famous Czech String Quartet at Acton Public Library, Friday night.

The event was sponsored by the South Central Regional Library System, which is presenting a number of concerts featuring the Hamilton Philharmonic Orchestra throughout the system, which includes Acton. Altogether the Philharmonic is presenting over 560 live performances this season, in groups varying in size from quartets to full orchestras of 80 members.

We were aware that the Czech String Quartet was appearing in Acton. Several others also knew of the concert, but we think we could say, without exaggerating, that the vast bulk of the people in Acton and district knew nothing of the event. Probably fewer still would know the identity of the group.

As a result, only a handful of people showed up to listen to some of the

world's best musicians perform in the limited confines of the library.

We realize chamber music is best performed to intimate audiences but we are also aware many people missed the performances who would have liked to have heard these four musicians play.

The quartet is composed of four of the leading string performers of Prague, who fled their native country in 1968 after the Russian occupation. As an admirer but hardly a connoisseur of classical music, this writer appeared at the concert to record the event on film. We expected to stay only a few minutes. But we were so charmed by the music we stayed through to the end.

There is a big difference in the quality of a performance when you actually are there. Never a lover of "chamber" music, we now have a deeper and better appreciation of it—especially as played by the Czech String Quartet.

We sincerely hope the South Central Regional Library System books more

outstanding concerts for the Acton library. At the same time we would hope they would publicize their efforts better.

## Editorial notes

Success is having your name in everything but the telephone directory.

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Town employees must have lots of influence with the weathermaker. Snow for them means long hours and little sleep. Rain is just wet. Last Thursday's snow meant working all day Thursday, returning at midnight to clean up the business section, and then taking to the plows during the daytime until five o'clock Friday afternoon.

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Tact has been defined as the ability to close one's mouth before someone else wants to do it.

## Bill Smiley



A lot of people would give their eye-teeth for some free publicity in this column for whatever they're selling. In fact, I have a large case of mounted eye-teeth which I haven't bothered returning.

For once, I'll make an exception. In this case, it's a plug for a television series. I'm not much of a T.V. hound. Most of the content is aimed at the 12-year-old mentality; and this is an insult to a bright 12-year-old.

Three BBC series, however, were well done enough to interest me. They were The Wives of Henry VIII, this year's Elizabeth R. and The Forsyte Saga. In each case we had superb entertainment, without the violence, off-colour jokes and after insanity which characterize so many well-known and avidly followed shows. I might add that one reason they appealed to me was that they were not trying to be "significant", merely good drama.

I remember saying to my wife, during the span of the Forsyte family, "Wouldn't the Jalna novels make a wonderful series?" She agreed, whereupon I put a nick in the doorpost. I do this every time she agrees with me. There are three nicks there now. Of course, we've only had this house for ten years.

Now we have it. A Canadian series, produced by the CBC, which can turn out first-class stuff when the creative people manage to wiggle out from under the meaty, far-from-green thumbs of the administrators. The Jalna series.

Mazo de la Roche, creator of the Jalna novels, will never be ranked with Shakespeare or Dickens. But she was an excellent craftsman, with a shrewd knowledge of the reading public, able to blend romanticism and realism into a mixture that had a universal appeal.

It was the same old story. Practically unknown in Canada, she submitted her novel Jalna to a U.S. contest and won the Atlantic Monthly prize of \$10,000 (I believe), for best novel of the year.

She had found a rich vein of gold. Like Ian Fleming, who wrote the James Bond nonsense, and that character who churns out the Carry On Doctor stuff, she mined her lode to the depths, extracting every last nugget, and even panning for grains toward the end. Don't mistake me; she was a far better writer than the others mentioned.

The novels deal with a large, extremely complex family, the Whiteoaks, living on a big farm near Lake Ontario, and it covers several generations.

Our pioneer ancestors were about as much like the Whiteoaks as Pierre Trudeau is like me. And Jalna is about as real in rural 19th-century Canada as Camelot was in the barbaric dark ages. But this is part of the charm. They're escape novels, in the best sense of the word. Yet, the author creates characters who are not only attractive but memorable. And the love-hate relationships within the family are believable, because they are familiar.

I predict a run on the Jalna novels, if the TV series is any good. Regardless, treat yourself. They are available in most public libraries.

A little incident during the war proved to me that, despite their regionalism, the novels have an international appeal.

It was about May 2nd, 1945. The Russians had just "liberated" our prison camp. They were pretty drunk and disorderly, still celebrating May 1st, one of their big holidays, and they let us out for the evening. (Next day they locked us all up again.)

But we had one glorious spring evening of freedom. I set off for the little town near the camp with Nils Jorgenson, a huge Norwegian who spoke German.

We watched the Russians still pouring into the town, a motley and colorful crew. I remember a huge Cossack-looking type, with vast moustaches, riding a stallion. Slung over one shoulder was a machine pistol. Dangling from his saddle was a balalaika. On his other shoulder perched a tiny monkey. So help me!

We drifted into town, watched the Yanks picking up German girls, or trying to. We saw a big house, set back among the trees. Went up and knocked out of curiosity. A frightened old woman finally opened the door a crack. Nils spoke gently to her in German. She scuttled away. After a few moments, a stately, white-haired lady with great poise appeared, and imperiously demanded to know what we wanted.

Nils said we were just visiting, told her we were P.O.W.'s, a Norwegian and a Canadian.

She turned to me, and in stilted but grammatical English, asked eagerly, "You know ze Whiteoaks of Jalna?"

I confessed that I didn't know them personally, but we had a lively conversation about Rennie, the old ones, Finch, and the other characters, followed by a cup of ersatz coffee. Just a little incident, but one I'll never forget.

All this free publicity should gratify the CBC. But I warn them that if the series is rotten, I shall see them, scorch them, fry them, and boil them in their own oil.

## 20 years ago

Taken from the issue of the Free Press, Thursday, January 31, 1952.

A resident of Acton for over 30 years, Mrs. Peter Smith, Main St., will celebrate her 91st birthday Monday. She lived formerly in Bracebridge where her husband was superintendent of the Bracebridge plant of Beardmore and Co.

Skating on the Speed River at Rockwood last week a Rockwood lad, Bobbie Lawrence, 12, fell through the ice and was rescued by a friend who pulled him from the water. Kenneth Petty, nine, who was with the lad, grabbed him and was able to pull him back onto the ice. Bobbie went right under water, but he hurried home, warmed up and evidently had no after effects.

Further arrangements for the completion of the Halton County Home for the Aged were made when Mr. and Mrs. E. W. Clark of Guelph were appointed superintendent and matron of the new institution. There was a breath of spring at the farm of Charlie Cutts, R.R. 4, Acton. Outside in the bitter cold a pair of spring lambs were born.

A pioneer in teaching music in the public schools, Annie Grace Jolliffe died at her home in Rockwood on January 25. She had lived all her life in the district.

Acton Rotary club has agreed to co-operation with the Home and School Association in the purchase of some playground equipment for the school. Vic Rumley gave his classification talk and two new members were welcomed, Harold Kinread and Ken Hassard.

A group of ladies from the Arts and Crafts groups meet each week to hook rugs. Smoking instruction has just started as well.

Groups of boys and girls have been taking swimming lessons at Guelph Y. arranged by the Y's Men's club.

Miss Grindley and the grade XI students had a toboggan party at the Braida farm.

## 50 years ago

Taken from the issue of the Free Press, Thursday, January 26, 1922.

Another success was registered for Acton Skating club in the carnival last week. At intervals the lights were turned off and a colored lantern used to illuminate the skaters. Best ladies' costume Mrs. N. H.

## Free Press back issues

Garden, Britannia; Miss Jessie McGregor, Little Bo Peep; gens' Mr. G. Lewis, Spanish officer, Mr. E. Gamble, Redskin Indian; best couple Mr. A. Mochrie, Reolette; Miss M. Garvin, Witch; Mr. G. Somerville, Uncle Sam; Miss O. Armstrong, Queen of Hearts; best girls' costume Dorothy McPherson; Doris McDonald, Little Red Riding Hood; boys Russell Weadge, Piccanini, Max Starkman, Indian; race winners, John Kentner, Fred Ewing, Hazel Mason, O. Armstrong, Jean Kennedy.

The large attendance of members at the annual meeting of Acton Fall Fair Monday afternoon in the council chamber manifested a very gratifying interest in the popular fair. Sandy McLean was elected president, Wallace Lasby first vice-president, second vice president C. Woodhall; secretary-treasurer George Hynds.

The fire inspector visited Ferguson on Friday and as usual on such occasions found the brigade napping. The chief was out of town, the alarm was frozen up, hydrant wrenches could not be found, while some of the members never heard the alarm at all. When things got going we believe the test was satisfactory.

The annual meeting of Acton Farmers' Club was held in the town hall. The turnover of shipments and store sales aggregate over \$60,000. W. G. Murray is president, R. L. Davidson vice-president, executive Robert Kerr, T. A. Storey, R. W. Lowrie, John McGregor, C. M. Beswick, Nelson McLaughlin, M. O. Mowat, J. D. Brown and C. B. Swackhamer.

When you see silk-clad ankles these days, you wonder if she's trying to catch pneumonia or a man.

## 75 years ago

Taken from the issue of the Free Press, Thursday, February 4, 1897.

Old bruin hadn't much of a chance of seeing his shadow on Tuesday unless he got up before breakfast.

The G.T.R. authorities, like all other employers of labor, are economizing. The wages of freight handlers earning \$1.25 per day and over have been reduced 10 cents a day.

One of the most comfortable and attractive residences for its size will be completed this week for Mr. Alex Ramshaw at the corner of Guelph and Agnes Sts. It is a frame edifice with neat verandah, hall, parlor and dining room separated by folding doors, and from the upper hall open three bedrooms. The house is very conveniently laid out.

Ashgrove school has been closed for a couple of weeks on account of scarlet fever. Australia has turned against the customs of her mother country and abolished barmaids.

Mr. J. W. Burt, who for 36 years has been the painstaking secretary of Erin Agricultural Society, has resigned his position owing to failing health. He is succeeded by Mr. James Kirkwood M.P.P. The society last week presented Mr. Burt with a complimentary address.

Mrs. McDermott, 90 years of age, was picked up near Ottawa apparently frozen to death. The neighbors had a wake on the body Saturday. During the wake the old woman caused a panic by coming to life. She is now as well as ever.

Ad—The marvellous cures by Paine's Celery Compound in the month of January make a record far surpassing that of any other previous month. Hundreds of letters were sent in by saved men and women truly plucked from the grave. Try it once; a bottle or two will work wonders.



by Hartley Coles

## COLES' SLAW

I left you last week as the ship Sunward sailed out of Miami harbor bound for Key West after we had struggled on board with luggage because of a dock strike. Just as we boarded the ship the heavens decided to get rid of some excess H<sub>2</sub>O and as we struggled to get our bearings in the two by four cabin, the ship slipped its moorings and headed for the open sea.

Now I've never advertised the fact that I'm descended from some of those stubborn British sea dogs on my mother's side of the family. I had reckoned this would hold me up through the voyage. However, we had not gone very far on the Sunward into the open sea when the old tummy started to feel a bit woody.

It was only by a determined bid to keep my sea legs that I weathered the first night and the magnificent meals on the ship. Confined to the cabin after a tour of all the decks and a look at the bars and other amusements such as slot machines which merrily started to tinkle once we got beyond the territorial waters of the U.S. I started to develop claustrophobia.

If you have ever tried to sleep in the top bunk of a small ship's cabin with the ceiling about two feet above your head, you'll know what I mean. The ship rolled and pitched as the sea got rougher in the storm.

Despite almost complete exhaustion, I managed to stay awake for most of the time I spent in the bunk. At about 3.30 a.m. I couldn't stand any more of the rolling so I dressed, slipped out of the cabin and headed for the deck where fresh Caribbean air was pouring over the ship interspersed with showers.

I gulped in prodigious quantities of the warm moist air, starting to feel better almost immediately, noting at the same time that I could detect, lights from the Keys, the little islands that swing out to Key West from the tip of continental Florida, to the west.

We passed beams from lighthouses and every now and again met a ghostly looking ship in the night.

You've heard Frank Sinatra croon that song Strangers in the Night? I thought it was appropriate, wondering who else was wandering along the sea at that time of night, also if their stomach was churning at the same rate as mine.

It was about then I felt rather than saw another presence beside me at the rail. I turned to greet the stranger whom I expected would be a member of the crew bidding me stay well away from the rail, since the sea was sure to have some hungry sharks eager to start a meal with Coles Slaw.

But the new presence turned out to be Charlie, with the same warm, drawn expression I had on my face.

"Ah ha," I said grinning from ear to ear—"another Caribbean casualty."

"I couldn't sleep," he confessed. "The

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